Committee on Science

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CONGRESS BOLSTERS NATION'S DEFENSES IN WAR ON CYBERTERRORISM

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congress today put the final stamp of approval on a Science Committee plan to shore up the nation's cybersecurity. The bill, which is now cleared for Presidential approval, is the result of numerous Congressional hearings that highlighted the emerging cyber-terrorist threat and the lack of a coordinated U.S. response.

Under the bill (H.R. 3394), the National Science Foundation (NSF) will create new cybersecurity research centers, undergraduate program grants, community college grants and fellowships. The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) will create new program grants for partnerships between academia and industry, new post-docs, and a new program to encourage senior researchers in other fields to work on computer security. "The Cyber Security Research and Development Act" authorizes $903 million over five years for these new programs, to ensure that the U.S. is better prepared to prevent and combat terrorist attacks on private and government computers.

Science Committee Chairman and chief sponsor of the legislation **Rep. Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY)** said, "For too long, cybersecurity has just not been a research priority. The private sector was much more focused on making computers cheaper, faster and easier to use; the market did not put a premium on security. Government similarly turned its attention elsewhere. As a result, computers have become omnipresent - we are more and more at their mercy - without becoming any more secure. In an age of terrorism, such willful ignorance about cybersecurity has got to come to an end."

The bill is virtually the same as the version that passed the House on February 7, 2002 by a vote of 400-12. Minor amendments negotiated with the Senate include: making the language compatible with H.R. 5005, the "Department of Homeland

Security Act;" creating a traineeship program to increase the number of faculty prepared to teach college-level courses in cyber security; directing NIST to develop checklists, for use by Federal agencies, that set forth the security settings and options that are available on Federally procured hardware and software; and, ensuring that students and universities that participate in the program are in compliance with federal immigration laws.

"Cyber security is more important than ever, but the supply of qualified IT trained professionals falls short. In our technologically advanced world, cyber threats are as dangerous as physical threats. This legislation recognizes that we must train a new generation of cyber warriors to defend our critical infrastructure with keyboard and mouse," said **Rep. Lamar Smith (R-TX)**.

Representative Brian Baird (D-WA), whose own legislation is incorporated in H.R. 3394 added, "In today's world, security has to mean more than locking doors and installing metal detectors. Our economy relies on a vast information infrastructure that is woefully under protected. This bill puts the best and the brightest to work developing ways of making our computer networks impenetrable."

"Just a few weeks ago, an electronic attack crippled 13 computer servers that manage Internet traffic. While this hour-long attack went nearly unnoticed by routine computer users, a longer attack could cripple communication, infrastructure operations, and even national security efforts. We cannot allow attacks like this to happen again," added **Research Subcommittee Chairman Nick Smith (R-MI)**. "As we move forward in our war against terrorism, it will be as important for us to secure cyber space as it will be for us to secure the homeland against malicious attack."

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